

01027

1963/10/23

Action

Control: 17988

Rec'd: OCTOBER 23, 1963
8:21 AM

SS

Info

FROM: SAIGON

TO: Secretary of State

EYES ONLY

NO: 770, OCTOBER 23, 7 PM

PRIORITY.

ACTION PRIORITY DEPARTMENT 770, INFORMATION CINCPAC 441.

EYES ONLY FOR SECRETARY RUSK.

PASS EYES ONLY SECRETARY MCNAMARA AND MCCONE.

CINCPAC EXCLUSIVE FOR ADMIRAL FELT.

1. AS FOLLOW-UP TO APPROACH REPORTED IN EMBTEL 731, RICHARD STILWELL AND [REDACTED] MET COL. LE QUANG TUNG, CHIEF OF VIETNAMESE SPECIAL FORCES, AT THE LATTER'S HEADQUARTERS IN SAIGON ON THE AFTERNOON OCTOBER 21, 1963. DURING MOST OF THE MEETING THE VIETNAMESE SPECIAL FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF, MAJOR LE QUANG TRIEU, WHO IS TUNG'S BROTHER, WAS ALSO PRESENT. THE PURPOSE FOR THE MEETING WAS EXPLAINED TO COLONEL TUNG IN APPROXIMATELY THE SAME MANNER AS WAS THE CASE WITH SECRETARY THUAN. TUNG CLAIMED TO BE UNAWARE OF THE PREVIOUS APPROACH TO SECRETARY THUAN AND OF THE LETTER ON THIS SUBJECT WHICH HAD BEEN SENT BY GENERAL HARKINS TO PRESIDENT DIEM.

2. COL. TUNG REACTED STRONGLY TO THE STATEMENT THAT SPECIAL FORCES WOULD NO RPT NO LONGER BE SUPPORTED UNLESS THEY ARE SUBORDINATED TO THE DIRECT, EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE JGS. HE CLAIMED SPECIAL FORCES ARE ALREADY UNDER SUCH CONTROL AND THAT HE "RENDERS ACCOUNT" TO THE JGS OF THE MOVEMENTS OF ALL HIS COMPANIES. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS NOT SATISFACTORY; THAT THE US GOVT DESIRED UNITY OF COMMAND WHEREBY SPECIAL FORCES COME UNDER THE DIRECT CONTROL OF THE JGS IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THEIR IMPACT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR. SOMEWHAT HEATEDLY,

REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY IS
PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"**EYES ONLY**

SANITIZED

Dept. of State (NW-83-816)
BY [signature] NARS, DATE 11/22/82

-2- 770, OCTOBER 23, 7 PM FROM SAIGON.

COL. TUNG STATED THAT WHILE THERE WERE CERTAIN INTELLIGENCE FUNCTIONS OF HIS TROOPS ON WHICH HE REPORTED DIRECTLY TO THE PRESIDENCY AND COUNSELOR NHU, ALL OTHER DISPOSITIONS OF HIS UNITS ARE UNDERTAKEN WITH AN "ORDRE DE MISSION" ISSUED BY THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF.

3. COL. TUNG THEN ASKED IF THIS SAME CONTROL APPLIED TO THE CIVILIAN AIRBORNE RANGER OR IF THE CIVIL GUARD COMPANIES

TUNG REPLIED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN MILITARY AND PARAMILITARY FORCES, THAT WHILE THESE LATTER FORCES WERE UNDER THE GENERAL CONTROL OF JGS, THEY WERE USED IN A MORE FLEXIBLE MANNER AS WAS AGREED FROM THE BEGINNING.

4. REPEATED THAT THE CIVILIAN AIRBORNE RANGER COMPANIES COULD NOT RPT NOT BE SUPPORTED UNLESS SUBORDINATED TO JGS CONTROL. IN ANGER, TUNG RETORTED THAT

HE WOULD DISSOLVE THEM.

WHEN ASKED IF HE COULD DO THIS OF HIS OWN AUTHORITY, HE ADMITTED THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO GET AN ORDER FROM THE PRESIDENCY TO DO SO.

TUNG WAS QUESTIONED IF HE WOULD RATHER DISSOLVE THE CIVILIAN RANGERS THAN PLACE THEM UNDER ARVN CONTROL. GEN. STILWELL INDICATED THAT THERE ARE MAP SPACES FOR THREE ADDITIONAL SPECIAL FORCES COMPANIES AND POSSIBLY THESE CIVILIAN AIRBORNE RANGER COMPANIES COULD BE CONVERTED TO ARVN UNITS. IN A COOLER VEIN COL. TUNG STATED THAT ARVN RECRUITMENT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE IF THEY WOULD VOLUNTEER. HE FOLLOWED THIS BY INSISTING THAT THE CIVILIAN RANGER COMPANIES AS WELL AS THE ARVN RANGER COMPANIES ARE UNDER JGS CONTROL.

5. AFTER SOME FURTHER DISCUSSION, TUNG WAS REMINDED THAT GEN. STILWELL WERE UNDER THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THEIR GOVERNMENT, THAT IF THERE IS SOME MISUNDERSTANDING AS TO CONTROL OF THE SPECIAL FORCES UNITS, THIS IS POSSIBLY A MATTER WHICH THE PRESIDENT WOULD WISH TO TAKE UP WITH AMBASSADOR LODGE. THIS WAS LATER REITERATED AND IT IS BELIEVED TUNG UNDERSTOOD THAT JGS CONTROL IS NOT RPT NOT A MATTER FOR NEGOTIATION.

16. UNDER THE

TOP SECRET

-3- 770, OCTOBER 23, 7 PM FROM SAIGON.

6. UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF DEPTEL 570 TUNG WAS ALSO TOLD THAT SUPPORT OF THE MOUNTAIN SCOUT AND BORDER SURVEILLANCE UNITS HAS PASSED ~~TO MACV~~ TO MACV. GEN. STILWELL INDICATED THAT HENCEFORTH, PAYMENTS WOULD BE MADE THROUGH MACV/SPECIAL FORCES MECHANISMS AND THAT HE WOULD ARRANGE A GET-TOGETHER BETWEEN HIS STAFF AND COL. TUNG'S STAFF. TUNG APPEARED TO ACCEPT THIS IN GOOD GRACE.

7. PAYMENTS TO CIVILIAN AIRBORNE RANGERS ARE NOW SUSPENDED UNTIL EVIDENCE AVAILABLE THEY SUBORDINATED TO JGS CONTROL.

8. STILWELL ADVISED GEN. DON OF CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY THUAN ON OCTOBER 17. IN A SUBSEQUENT CONFERENCE ON OCTOBER 22, GEN. DON INFORMED STILWELL THAT JGS WAS DEVELOPING MODUS OPERANDI FOR ASSUMPTION OF CONTROL OVER VNSF AND FOR DEPLOYMENT OF COMPANIES TO FIELD.

GP-1.

LODGE

MBK-25

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 10 AM, OCTOBER 23, 1963.
RELAYED TO DEFENSE & CIA, AT 10 AM, OCTOBER 23, 1963
RELAYED WHITE HOUSE AT 9:34 AM, OCTOBER 23, 1963.

TOP SECRET